1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587] wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684 ●
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison- 835
horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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illicit intercourse with a young widow who had been born a Gume, and had a child by her dead husband. This was regarded as incest. The youth was put to the ordeal of plunging his hand into boiling cow-dung and water, and as he was very severely scalded the couple were adjudged guilty. The youth was ultimately received back into the community after a penal feast to the clan, and has since married legitimately; but the widow and her child were driven out of the *pargana*, and in 1934 were said to be living in a village some forty miles away near the Chanda border of Kutru. This was the only definite example of a breach of the rules of exogamy among Hill Marias that came to my notice. In Padalbhum and Tapalibhum *parganas*, however, there were said to have been one or two cases within memory in which both the man and the woman had been received back into the clan after recovery of heavy penalties from them and their parents and after they had sworn to separate and never repeat the offence. It was stated that a child born of such an incestuous union would never be admitted to social or religious ceremonies, or given a wife. Among the Bison-horn Marias connexions between men and women of the same clan appear never to occur, but cases are by no means unknown of affairs between men and women of the same phratry, and it was stated that these are regularized by a visit to the clan-god of the man, with the child, if any, of the union, and by the payment of a heavy fine. I had to try the son of a *waddai* clan-priest who had killed his father because the latter, after first seducing the wife of the accused's younger brother, had raped the accused's wife and driven both his sons out of the house. In this case the two women were not of the same phratry as their father-in-law, and he could have married them had they not been married to his sons. Tribal feeling against the dead man was extremely bitter, and, though it was recognized that the son was justified in slaying his father, this alone was not sufficient to purify the two sons from the guilt of their father's incest; a heavy fine was imposed on them, to collect which took them three years, though in the meantime the elder son was allowed to succeed his father as clan-priest and to officiate as such, and both were admitted to the *pandum* and other feasts. In two other murder cases there was a remarkable hostility displayed by witnesses towards husbands, in one case the accused and in the other the brother of the murdered man, whose wives were suspected of incestuous love affairs; but it was not possible to ascertain exactly what had happened. The general idea seems to be that such incest will bring upon the community the special wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, in the form of visitations of man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers, or famine or pestilence.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by
688 having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Mur.a

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE FOUR

Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions

Male	112
Female	5

The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases

Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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went behind the house, ostensibly to relieve herself, thinking her husband asleep. But he was really watching and when she did not return, he went in search for her and found her in sexual congress with the Kalar. He returned to the house, got his bow and double-pointed *engram* arrow and killed her. The Kalar made his escape.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

The relative predominance of constitutional factors in crimes of violence and lust are believed by European criminologists to explain the very striking differences in the seasonal frequency of these crimes. Sullivan gives a Table based on the police reports of indictable offences for 1909 in England which shows that, while there is comparatively little variation in the frequency of crimes of acquisitiveness from month to month, there is a marked degree of seasonal frequency in crimes of violence and lust, giving a curve of incidence which rises to a maximum in the hot months. This may be explained by the fact that in these forms of delinquency biological factors play an important part.[1] Among the Bison-horn Maria seasonal variations, though less striking, do exist, as the following Table shows.

TABLE SIX

Showing the incidence of 100 homicides by the time of year

January	9
February	9
March	5
April	10
May	10
June	3
July	9
August	8
September	10
October	12
November	9
December	6

[1] W. C. Sullivan, *Crime and Insanity* (London, 1924), pp. 21 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

I. Murder for gain.
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674X for where is the property to be acquired? It would be 152 laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 688

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she
[845] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
937 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and kill.[1] A few young husbands keep careful guard over their wives and when they see them going to an assignation, do not stop them then, but follow, watch and at the critical moment intervene.

Poyami Masa had two wives, Gadme and Dome. One day Dome found her elder co-wife in conversation with a Dhobi who was trying to seduce her. In order to get him to go away Gadme told him to come at night to the house and promised to meet him. When Masa came home from his work, the younger wife told him everything, probably only too glad to make trouble. He became very angry and beat Gadme and took her immediately to confront the Dhobi, but was unable to find him. Then he went to the headman to ask him to take action against the Dhobi. All day long he was in a passion of rage, clenching his teeth and continually talking about his wife's scandalous behaviour. When she tried to give him food, he refused to take it. After supper Gadme and her three children went to bed, but Masa lay awake in the dark brooding until he could contain himself no longer. Just before dawn he got up and stabbed Gadme with an arrow. He was probably intending by this to make it look as though Gadme had committed suicide out of remorse for her behaviour. But he did not do his work properly, and the woman lived long enough to say what had happened to her. In this case the Court took into consideration the fact not only that Masa had been wronged, but that he believed himself to have been wronged by a member of a caste which the Maria despise.

In Chhindgaon a man of about thirty-five years, Burka by name, began to suspect his wife of deceiving him with Hirma, a neighbour who lived opposite his house. One afternoon—it was Tuesday, 16 December 1924—the woman told her husband that she was going to catch fish in a tank. Burka was suspicious and secretly watched her.

[1] By the Kanikar of Travancore, 'adultery is viewed with great abhorrence, and punishment for this offence varies in different localities. At Kulathupula the punishment inflicted on the adulterer is this. His legs are tied to the branch of a tree with the head hanging down. Straw strewn with chillies is spread on the ground and burned. The body of the culprit is swung to and fro and he is in the meanwhile given twenty-five lashes with a cane on the buttocks. The guilty woman is given fifteen lashes by a man who marries her, even though he may have already been married'. L. A. Krishna Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillai in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 224.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Bison Horn Maria

674-684 He saw her go across the road to where Hirma was winnowing grain, and after a word with him proceed towards the tank. After a little while, Burka went over to Hirma's house to see if he was there, but did not find him. So he got his axe and went off in pursuit. Below the tank he saw Hirma and his wife going into the jungle together. He crept quietly to the place, and there discovered the two lovers in the act of sexual congress. He struck Hirma on the back with his axe and rolled him over, and then gave him four blows on the head and left him for dead. His wife sprang up, but he gave her a heavy blow with the back of his axe behind the left ear. She fell to the ground and he gave her a second blow just above the first, and she died.

Burka then went and told the Kotwar of the village what he had done, and with the Kotwar went to the Manjhi. When they went to see the bodies, they found Hirma still alive and Burka tried to get his axe in order to finish him off. But he was prevented.

Poriami Podiya was a young man of about twenty years who had been married only for a year. He either suspected or (as he himself claimed) actually discovered his wife having intercourse with another man. He beat her with his fists and dragged her to the jungle in spite of several remonstrances from the neighbours, and went on beating her there till she fell to the ground. Even then, as he himself admitted, when he found she still had some life in her, he determined to make an end of her and her intrigues with her lover. He twisted a creeper-thong round her neck, but finding it was not long enough for the purpose, tied a cloth round her neck and to a tree. Probably he first strangled her, and then tied her up to give the impression of suicide. During his trial Podiya showed no sign of appreciating the enormity of his crime, which he seems to have regarded as a just retribution for his wife's unchastity.

Marvi Deva killed his little daughter about four years old and tried to kill his wife, because he suspected her of betraying him. He declared that he had twice caught her in the arms of men whom he was unable to identify, and that on the night of the murder he had seen her talking to a man in a neighbour's compound. The man had run away

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Bison Horn Maria

before he could catch him. He took his wife home and tried to force her to give him the name of her lover. When she refused, he took his axe and struck his little daughter who was standing by and crying with fright, and killed her instantly. He then tried to kill his wife who was carrying her baby in a cloth passed round her shoulder, but she managed to escape. Deva picked up the body of his dead child and carried it into the jungle where he left it under a tree covered with a cloth. The Court was sceptical about Deva's accusations of his wife's unchastity, particularly because he could not give the names of her lovers. But this seems to me entirely in keeping with a Maria's pride, particularly if Deva knew that the seducer was someone in a forbidden relationship or someone whom he disliked. Although some aborigirals have no shame in these matters, others are very reluctant to admit the actual names of men who have seduced their wives.

There is the curious point that, according to one version of the incident, Deva asked his wife to give him tobacco or, in other words, to have sexual intercourse with him, and her refusal to do so was the final spark that caused the explosion. This again is, I think, in line with primitive psychology. The husband would have been powerfully excited sexually by the thought of his wife being possessed by another man; he would desire to reassert his rights over her and perhaps to test her. Her refusal to do what he wanted proved to him that his suspicions were well founded.

A very influential man named Nanda, who was the Siraha of Killepal, met his death on the night of the festival of the Village Mother in April 1932. Nanda and Poyami Panda had married two sisters and both families lived in one compound with the old father-in-law. For some time past Panda had suspected Nanda of an intrigue with his wife Hirme. He had been foolish enough to go to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind in too close an association with the exciting and important personality of the Siraha. When he returned he displayed many of the symptoms of pathological jealousy. He was continually asking his wife whether she had had intercourse with Nanda, and he tried hard to get her to leave the village, where she lived in such

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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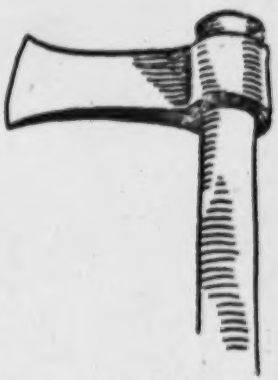
Bison Horn Maria

an undesirable proximity to her lover, and go to live elsewhere. This, however, she refused to do.

It is very difficult to discover what really happened on the night of the festival, for everybody was drunk on rice-beer. Several different versions of the incident were given. It seems probable that early in the evening Panda found his wife standing in the courtyard and slapped her; perhaps he suspected that she was looking for her lover. Nanda saw what happened and told Panda not to hit his wife, for the child she was holding in her arms might fall down and be injured. A little later, Panda wanted to get a bamboo tube to keep his tobacco in. He started to cut a bit from a pole on which bunches of maize were hanging. Nanda again interfered and told him not to cut it, for the maize would fall down. Panda took no notice and went on cutting the bamboo. Nanda then lost his temper, and told him that he was a very quarrelsome person and no one could live with him. He suggested that he should go away to another village and live with his brother. At this Panda retorted that the real reason why Nanda wanted him to go away was because he was in love with Hirme.



Godel axe

There was no violence in the quarrel at this point, and Nanda went away to his own house in the same compound. Hirme was making leaf-cups in her father's house, and later—it was dark and everyone was drunk—Nanda seems to have taken the opportunity of slipping into the room and embracing her. Suddenly Panda entered, and finding his wife and her lover together—he claims that they were actually enjoying sexual intercourse—he lost all control of himself, picked up an axe and killed his rival.

Hemla Gunda was the Dhurwa or clan-priest of the Hemla clan-god. He was also a well-known medicine-man and, although he was excommunicated for reasons that will

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

appear immediately, was a person of great influence among the Maria of Bijapur Tahsil. 674x 684

He was, however, a cruel and unnatural man. About a year before his murder, he seduced the wives of each of his two sons, and not content merely to seduce them drove out of his house his own wife and his two sons, and lived there openly with the two young girls. He refused to do anything to maintain his wife and would not give his sons any share in the family property, although by tribal custom he should have allowed its partition, since he was doing nothing to support his family.

When the sons applied to the panchayat for justice, that body met, but so great was Gunda's influence that they were afraid to take any strong line against him. But they did excommunicate him for his relations with the wives of his own sons and for the even more serious offence of keeping a Ghasia woman. [688]

In May 1928, one of the sons, Hemla Mundra, went to his father's house and attempted to get some share of the property. He failed then, but on the afternoon before the murder, returned and tried to take away two cows from the family herd. His father caught him and abused him, and the boy was so annoyed that he struck the older man on the face with a lathi, a blow that probably fractured the jaw. Gunda prepared to go to the police station to make a report against his son. Mundra, reflecting that his father had not only robbed him of his wife and property, but was now going to deprive him of his liberty as well, decided to kill him and prevent him from going to the police. He managed to get ahead of Gunda on the path, and the moment he appeared broke his skull with several blows of a heavy stick.

The murder was regarded by the other Maria as justified, and they hushed up the whole affair, reporting to the police that Gunda had died of smallpox. Indeed the case would never have come to light, had it not been that a prisoner in jail in the vain hope of getting his own sentence mitigated reported the matter. Mr Grigson, who tried the case, sentenced the accused to one month's imprisonment.[1]

[1] A similar case was reported from the north of the State in 1940. Kanda, a Muria boy, killed his father near Pupgaon. The father had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

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Muria

[674 836 849] Murders committed on account of an unwelcome and unexpected pregnancy are not common, because of the high standard of domestic morals among the Maria and because if an unmarried girl is found pregnant, she is immediately married and the child is thus legitimized. But there is one authentic case in which a man was driven to kill his lover, though it may be said that it was her stupidity rather than her pregnancy that caused the tragedy. Mase was the wife of a man who deserted her for the Tea Gardens, leaving her alone and unsupported with three little children. She used to make some sort of living as a coolie. But presently Poriami Hirma fell in love with her and used constantly to visit her in her house, although he never officially kept her as his wife. In time she became pregnant and a panchayat was called to consider the matter. The elders decided to send information to Mase's husband's elder brother, an ex-convict and a harsh violent man, of whom the girl was greatly afraid.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 1933, Mase left her three children in the house and went to tell Hirma what had happened. She expected that her husband's elder brother would come that day and beat her and she suggested that Hirma should run away with her and hide. Hirma agreed and they went some way into the jungle and sat down under a tamarind tree. The weather was cold and they lit a fire, beside which they sat and talked. Mase was very frightened and depressed. She wept and threatened to kill herself. Hirma very properly asked her to come and live with him as his wife, and promised to look after her and the children. But the girl, who was obviously in

[674 684] seduced Kande's first wife, and the proper ceremonies of purification had been conducted. But when Kande took another wife, the father again attempted or, as some say, succeeded in seducing her, and this time there was a violent quarrel between father and son while they were catching birds in the jungle. The father actually complained to his son that the girl did not respond properly to his advances. Kande was assaulted by his father and killed him in return. When I saw this boy in jail a year later, the extraordinary sadness of his face contrasted strikingly with the expression of many of the more regular criminals. The villagers concealed the crime and when it was by chance discovered five months later, were very backward in co-operating with the police. Obviously as in the Mundra case, they considered it a very proper murder. But Kande was not so fortunate as Mundra and was sentenced not to a month, but to five years' imprisonment. This was later reduced to three years, and he was released in 1943.

3; Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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a hysterical condition, rebuked him and said that she would not go to his house or to any other, accusing him of having brought the trouble on her. Hirma got annoyed and kicked her violently in the stomach and the vagina. Mase was three months pregnant, and it is probable that the kick which was simply intended to bring her to her senses was the real cause of her death.

II

Only rarely do the complications of infidelity lead to suicide. A girl called Kare of Kosalnar came one day to Kadti Pandu as a Paitu wife. This means that she forcibly entered his house of her own accord, and he had to agree to accept her as his wife. They lived together for five months. Then there was a quarrel, and Kare went off to another village, Pharaspal, where she repeated the same trick with another man. Pandu ordered her to come home and she refused. So he beat her and brought her back by force. The following day the girl disappeared, and a search discovered her hanging from a mahua tree.

The reaction of Barse Konda to unchastity in his family circle was remarkable. He had one daughter named Jabbo. This girl was that very rare thing, a Maria girl of promiscuous habits. She was first married to a man of Samgiri. Then she went to a man at Gongral. From him she went to a man at Molasnar. From him she went to a man at Palnar. Some time in 1937 she left her Palnar husband and went to live with Kawasi Kosa of Rewali. For the Korta Pandum, the harvest festival of the new cucumbers and gourds, Jabbo went to her home at Nakulnar, and after three days her father Konda took her back to Rewali. Rewali is a notoriously ill-tempered village, and when Konda arrived he was badly received and abused by several of the people for his daughter's behaviour. He went home, angry and depressed, told his wife what had happened, and got very drunk. At supper he caught his wife by the hair and beat her. She ran away to a neighbour's house. Then Konda got out his drum and danced with it all night long. As the first cocks crew, he went into his house and hanged himself from the central beam of the roof.